

DEER HERD UNIT MANAGEMENT PLAN
Deer Herd Unit #28
(Panguitch Lake)
April 2006

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Garfield, Iron and Kane Counties - Boundary begins SR-14 and US-89; north on US-89 to SR-20; west on SR-20 to I-15; south on I-15 to SR-14; east on SR-14 to US-89.

LAND OWNERSHIP

RANGE AREA AND APPROXIMATE OWNERSHIP

| | Year-long range | | Summer Range | | Winter Range | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Ownership | Area (acres) | % | Area (acres) | % | Area (acres) | % |
| Forest Service | 3210 | 25 % | 246285 | 75% | 35427 | 17% |
| Bureau of Land Management | 4732 | 37 % | 4458 | 2% | 105564 | 52% |
| Utah State Institutional Trust Lands | 1003 | 8 % | 1708 | 0% | 12271 | 6% |
| Native American Trust Lands | 0 | | 0 | 0% | 47 | 0% |
| Private | 3667 | 29 % | 63930 | 19% | 43680 | 22% |
| Department of Defense | 0 | | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| USFS Wilderness | 0 | | 7082 | 2% | 0 | 0% |
| National Parks | 0 | | 6007 | 2% | | 0% |
| Utah State Parks | 0 | | 0 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Utah Division of Wildlife Resources | 0 | | 504 | 0% | 5100 | 3% |
| TOTAL | 12652 | 100 % | 329972 | 100% | 202088 | 100% |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--|---------------|--|---------------|--|
| TOTAL FROM 2001 PLAN | 0 | | 339543 | | 200914 | |
| CHANGE (+/-) | +12652 | | - 9571 | | + 1174 | |

UNIT MANAGEMENT GOALS

Maintain a healthy deer population with post season numbers that are in balance with available winter range. Cooperate with the various publics and agencies in managing deer to provide a diversity of deer hunting and viewing experiences.

POPULATION MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- < Target winter herd size: A modeled winter population of 8,500 deer. This population objective remains for both the short-term (5-year life of this plan) and long term, barring significant changes in range conditions.
- < Harvest: Antlerless harvest as needed to maintain stable herd size. Winter survival is highly dependent on snow accumulation on winter range on the west side of the unit.
- < Herd Composition: Maintain a region wide three-year average post-season buck:doe ratio ranging from 15 to 20 bucks per 100 does.

| | Objective from past plan (2001) | Long-term Objective | 2006-2011 Objective | Change |
|----------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Panguitch Lake | 8,500 | 8,500 | 8,500 | 0 |

POPULATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**Monitoring**

- < Population Size - Herd composition and population size will be monitored through post season and spring classification, hunter check stations, harvest surveys and computer modeling.
- < Buck Age Structure- Monitor age class structure of the buck population through the use of checking stations, postseason classification, uniform harvest surveys and field bag checks.
- < Harvest- The primary means of monitoring harvest will be through the statewide uniform harvest survey. Achieve the target population size by use of antlerless harvest using a variety of harvest methods and seasons. Buck only hunting will be the general harvest method for this unit, with any other strategies to be developed through the RAC and Wildlife Board process to achieve management objectives for buck:doe ratios.

Limiting Factors (May prevent achieving management objectives)

- < Crop Depredation - Agricultural crop damage will be minimized by deer barrier fences, herding and/or through landowner permits/depredation hunting. A large barrier fence, which will prevent deer depredation in several large alfalfa fields, extends several miles to the north from Paragonah into Buckhorn Flat. Range rehabilitation projects should reduce depredation problems on range and crop lands.
- < Habitat - At present, winter range is a limiting factor. Highway construction on the west side of the unit has limited the accessibility to winter range on the west side of I-15. This has created areas of heavy utilization and concentration north of Paragonah. Development has also reduced the amount of available winter range along the east side of I-15, especially in the Cedar City area. Excessive habitat utilization will be addressed through antlerless harvests.
- < Predation - Seek the assistance of USDA/Wildlife Services for coyote control where needed prior to and during fawning period. Balance cougar numbers with deer numbers.
- < Highway Mortality - Cooperate with the Utah Dept. of Transportation in construction of highway fences, passage structures and warning signs, etc.

- < Illegal Harvest – Specific preventive measures will be implemented through Action Plans developed in cooperation with the Law Enforcement section should illegal kill become an identified and significant source of mortality.
- < Interspecific competition - No limitation generated by elk/deer interactions has been documented.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

- < Maintain and protect all winter range where possible.
- < Improve forage quality on critical deer winter/spring habitat north of Paragonah and other areas as needed.
- < Provide improved habitat security and escape opportunities for deer.

Condition of deer winter range on Unit 28, as indicated by DWR range trend surveys.

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Mean DCI score for Unit</u> | <u>Classification</u> | <u>Unit-specific DCI score range: Poor</u> | <u>Unit-specific DCI score range: Fair</u> | <u>Unit-specific DCI score range: Good</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|--|--|--|
| 1998 | 52 | Good | 19-33 | 34-51 | 52-69 |
| 2003 | 37 | Fair | | | |

HABITAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- < Rely on DWR range trend studies and range rides to monitor habitat condition.
- < Complete habitat project north of Paragonah to improve spring and winter habitat for deer. The objective is to provide 90,000 lbs. of forage for 1500 deer during the spring/winter period.
- < Complete cooperative three year pinyon-juniper thinning project on BLM land south of Panguitch in the Dickinson Hill/Sheep Hill areas.
- < Continue to cooperate with private landowners and federal agencies on rehabilitation projects such as the recently completed burns on USFS lands on Five Mile Mountain.
- < Identify seasonal distribution for specific deer herd segments.

PERMANENT RANGE TREND SUMMARIES

Unit 28, Panguitch Lake

There are fifteen range trend study sites on the Panguitch Lake Unit (WMU #28). The most recent trend data were gathered on these sites in 2003. The majority of the range trends were downward for all categories (soil, browse, and herbaceous understory). Browse trend was downward on 9 out of 10 sites; a result of key browse species showing declines in population densities, increases in percent decadence, an increasing proportion of plants classified as “dying,” and decreased reproduction. These changes were primarily due to decreased precipitation during past years, despite the fact that deer populations have been reduced from prior levels through low recruitment.

Duration of Plan

This unit management plan was approved by the Wildlife Board on _____ and will be in effect for five years from that date, or until amended.